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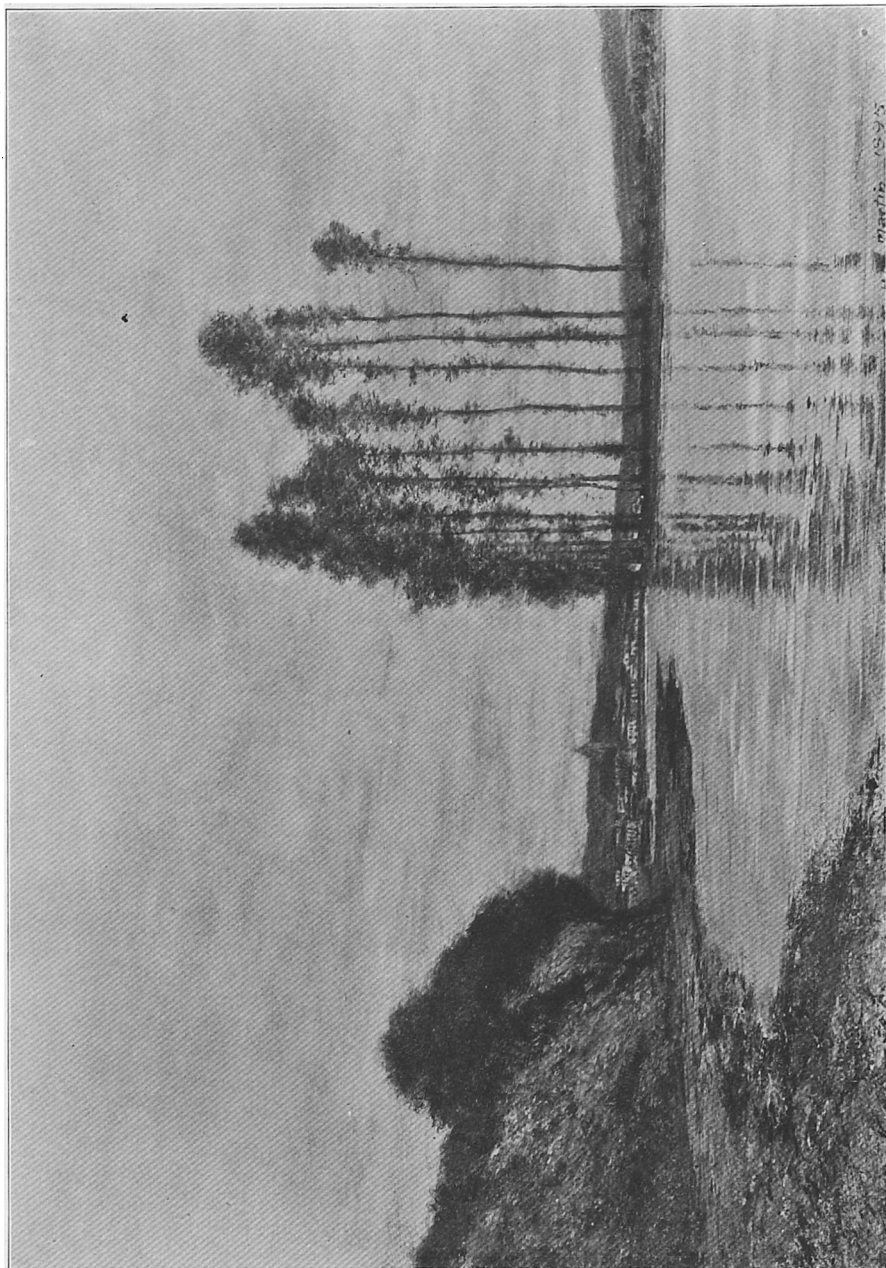
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ON THE SEINE ("HARP OF THE WINDS")

By Homer Martin

From "Homer Martin: A Reminiscence, by Permission of William Macbeth



BRUSH AND PENCIL

VOL. XV

JANUARY, 1905

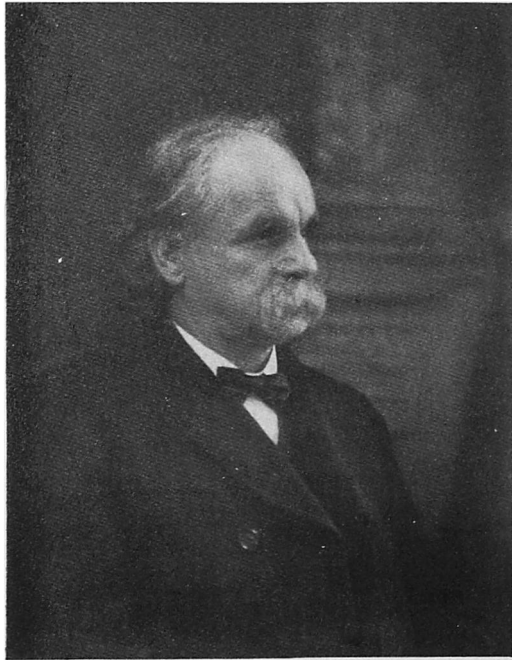
No. 1

EDWIN DEAKIN, AN ARTIST WITH A MISSION

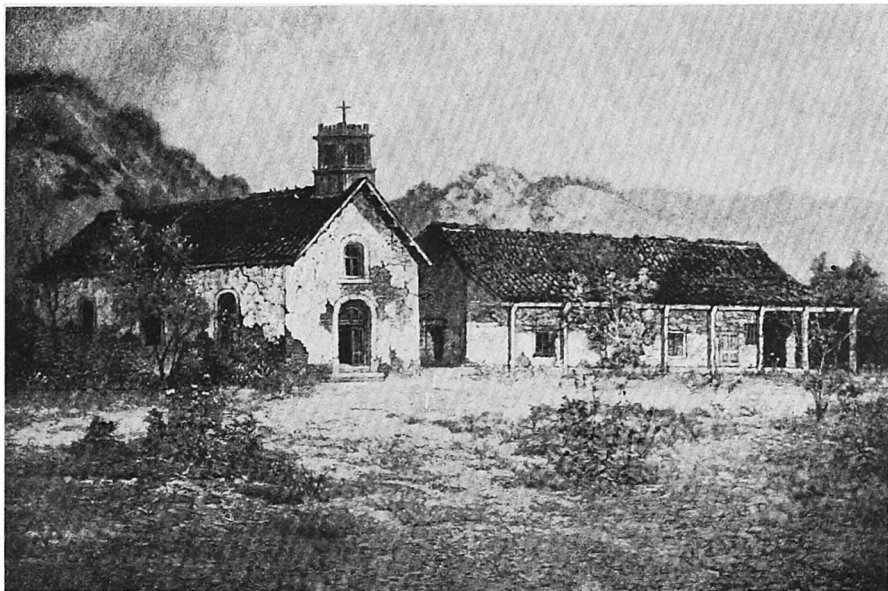
It is somewhat unique in America to find an artist devoting himself, with an assiduity akin to that of Piranisi, who recorded the vanishing glories of Italian architecture in a series of wonderful etchings, to perpetuating the beauties of a type of architecture in this country no less interesting though less pretentious. Such an artist, however, is Edwin Deakin, who for over thirty years, purely as a matter of love, since the element of commercialism has not entered into his self-assigned task, has been working, somewhat remittingly, but with no swerving or faltering purpose, to recording in a series of oil-paintings the picturesque buildings of the twenty-one missions of California.

For the most part these paintings have been made on the spot under conditions calcu-

lated to show the structures to the best advantage. Three of the missions, however, have already disappeared, and for these Mr. Deakin has been indebted to photographs and descriptions furnished him by personal acquaintances. The mission of San Jose was destroyed by earthquake in 1868, and the painting of this celebrated structure had to be made from a photograph furnished the artist by Mr. Watkins, to whom also the artist is indebted for a view of the corridor of Mission San Luis Obispo. Mission San Rafael is



EDWIN DEAKIN
From a Photograph



SOLANO

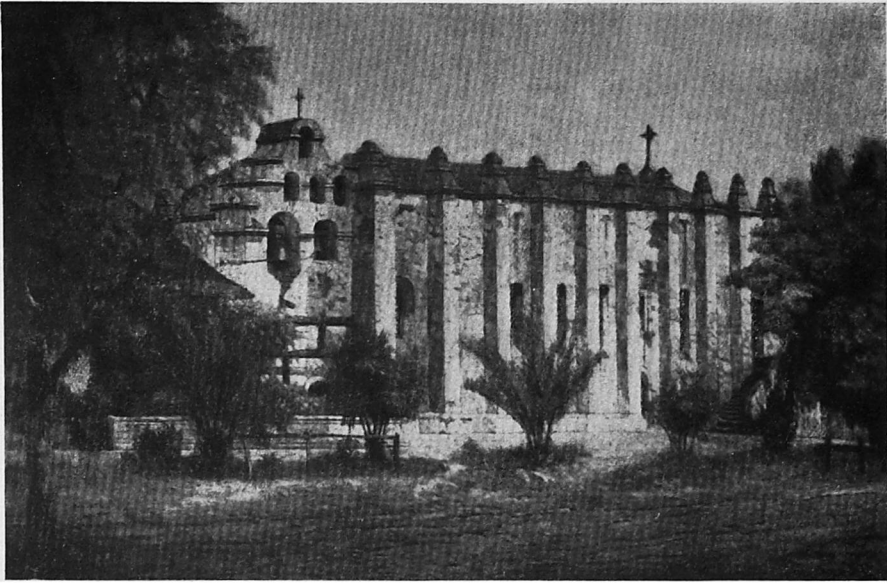
By Edwin Deakin

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also extinct, and the painting had to be made from a description furnished by William J. Miller. The outlines of Santa Clara Mission were obtained from a daguerreotype taken about 1855, and the outlines of Santa Cruz Mission, also extinct, were taken from an old oil-painting by L. Tousset. In these canvases Mr. Deakin had to draw on the imagination for many of the details and to trust to his artistic sense for the witchery of color with which he has invested them.

It was a happy thought to undertake the task of transmitting to future generations these notable old structures in all their time-worn beauty, and much credit is due to Mr. Deakin for the enterprise and devotion with which he has prosecuted the work. Many of these buildings are now in a good state of preservation, others are fast going to ruin, and as stated above, three are already entirely gone. The missions are nothing less than historic relics and the loss of the three that have succumbed to time is deeply regretted by the people of California.

Mr. Deakin began his work in 1870 by making sketches and studies of the Mission Dolores. Five years later he made similar sketches and studies of San Buenaventura and of Santa Inez, and the remaining eighteen missions were transferred to canvas between the years 1875 and 1899. Pilgrimages were even made to the sites of the three missions that have been wholly destroyed in order that the



SAN GABRIEL

By Edwin Deakin

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pictures made from photographs and descriptions might be true to actual topographical environment and invested with true local color.

What the ultimate disposition of this notable series of paintings will be is at present a matter of conjecture. Mr. Deakin has frequently been urged to break the series and sell individual canvases. This, however, he has steadfastly refused to do. It will readily be seen that the interest of the canvases is largely historical, and yet the crumbling condition of many of the structures and their unusual style of architecture lend them an air of the picturesque that is wholly wanting in many of the paintings the scenes of which have been carefully selected by artists for their intrinsic grandeur or beauty. Few of the localities selected as sketching-grounds by artists have the atmospheric beauties of California, and when to this is added the fact that some of these buildings date back to the middle of the eighteenth century and are stained and mellowed by time and crumbling into ruins it can easily be understood that the missions were subjects to delight the heart of a true painter.

And a true painter Mr. Deakin is. He was born in Sheffield, England, in 1840, and received his early education in his native town. Though grounded in the rudiments of his art by competent teachers, he as an artist is in a large sense self-made. From the outset of his career he has had a fondness for landscape and architectural views,

and it is possible that his love of these two forms of pictorial art determined him in selecting the missions of California as a sort of specialty, when, after following his art in England and France, he finally came to America, and after a time settled in Berkeley, California. Be that as it may, the determination was a happy one.



SAN LUIS REY

By Edwin Deakin

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It is quite outside the province of this article to discuss these paintings purely as works of art. They fall into a category of their own. They were designed as faithful transcriptions of vanishing monuments, and hence the artist has taken no liberties whatever with his subjects. He has simply selected the best views of the different structures and has been faithful in all his work to fact. The artist has felt that the buildings were replete with associations and sentiment, and he has been content to rely on this fact for the chief interest of his paintings. Hence, criticism may here be eschewed, and in its place a few facts may be given, largely in Mr. Deakin's own words, about the missions he has depicted.

It will be remembered that a number of years before any move was made to christianize Alta California, the Jesuits had established seventeen missions, extending from the extreme southern cape over the entire peninsula of Lower California. But Spain was rent by a continual struggle between church and state, the Jesuits were in



SAN DIEGO

By Edwin Deakin

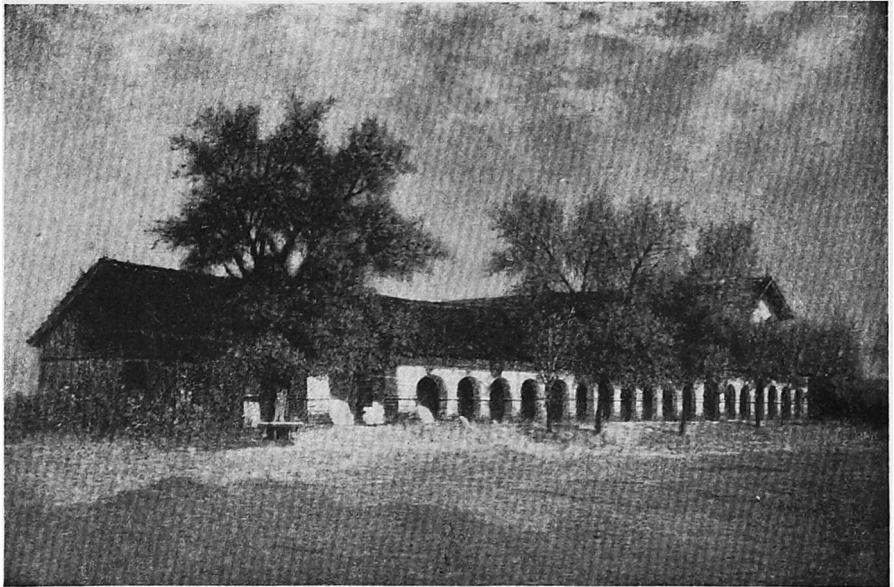
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especial disfavor, and affairs finally culminated, in 1767, in the utter expulsion of the Jesuit order from every establishment within the Spanish possessions. Then came the Franciscans, in 1769. They enjoyed the royal favor, and under the leadership of Father Junipero, as president, the series of structures painted by Mr. Deakin, was begun, the first to be founded being the mission San Diego de Alcala, July 16, 1769. Six years later it became necessary to move the mission five miles up the valley, and it is this ruin of the second building which still exists, voiceless yet eloquent of the past. There is little remaining of the ruin except the façade of the church and a few walls that will not long endure. The original plan of the padres was

to have the missions about a day's journey apart, and these may be briefly mentioned beginning in the south, following the course north.

The mission San Luis Rey de Francia, founded in 1793, is about forty miles north of San Diego, and is a beautiful structure mostly in Spanish-Moorish style, with tower and open belfry on one side of the church, and long lines of arches now in ruins, that form the adjoining inclosure. The huge timbers used in its erection, blessed by the priests, were carried on the shoulders of Indians from a distance of twenty miles and not permitted to touch the ground until they reached the consecrated spot. San Juan Capistrano, founded in 1776, stands about two miles from the shore with a line of hills for a background. The church was of stone, with walls about five feet thick. Its destruction came on the day of the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, in 1812, while mass was being said, between thirty and forty persons being killed. This mission was especially noted for its industries, men, women, and children all being engaged in useful occupations.

San Gabriel Arcangel dates from 1771, and is perhaps one of the best known of the missions owing to its nearness to Los Angeles and Pasadena. The building is still well preserved, and has an individuality of its own. The walls are buttressed and the extension of one at the rear forms a picturesque belfry. The site of this old structure



SAN JUAN BAUTISTA

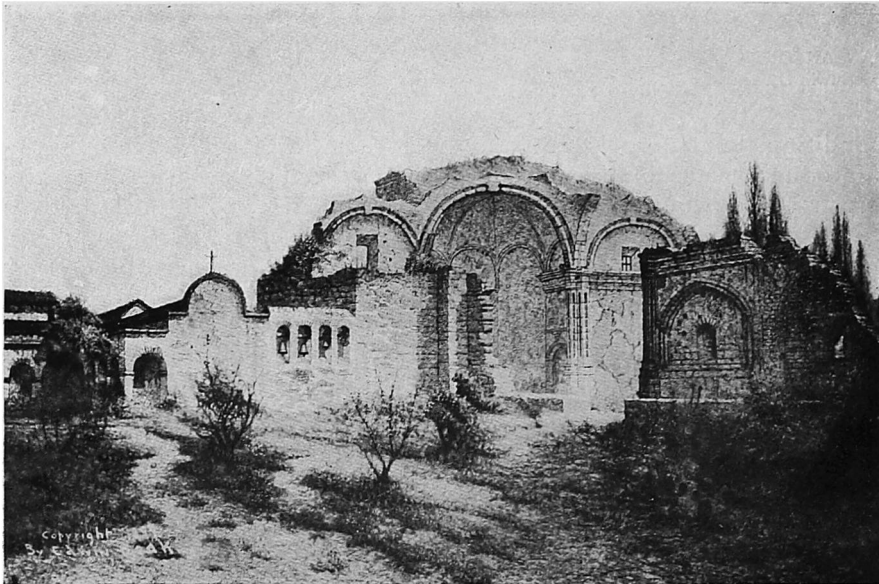
By Edwin Deakin

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is especially interesting. Mission San Fernando Rey de España, dating from 1797, stands a mile or so from the little town of San Fernando in a vast grain country, and the few buildings still remaining in a habitable condition are used by ranch hands, who cultivate the earth to their very doors. Occasional mass is said to this day in the one room reserved as a chapel. San Buenaventura, dating from 1782, is to-day in the heart of the busy town of Ventura, and is robbed of most of its charm, partly by its surroundings, and partly by its restorations.

Mission Santa Barbara is another of the well-known structures which is likely to share the same fate, owing to the gradual encroachment of the town of Santa Barbara. Forty miles across the mountains from Santa Barbara is Santa Inez, one of the plainest of the mission buildings, and eighteen miles northwest is the almost unknown Purissima, of which little remains to the student of the past. San Luis Obispo, with its boarded walls and shingled roofs, has little to recall the real mission architecture, while San Miguel retains in a very marked degree its original character.

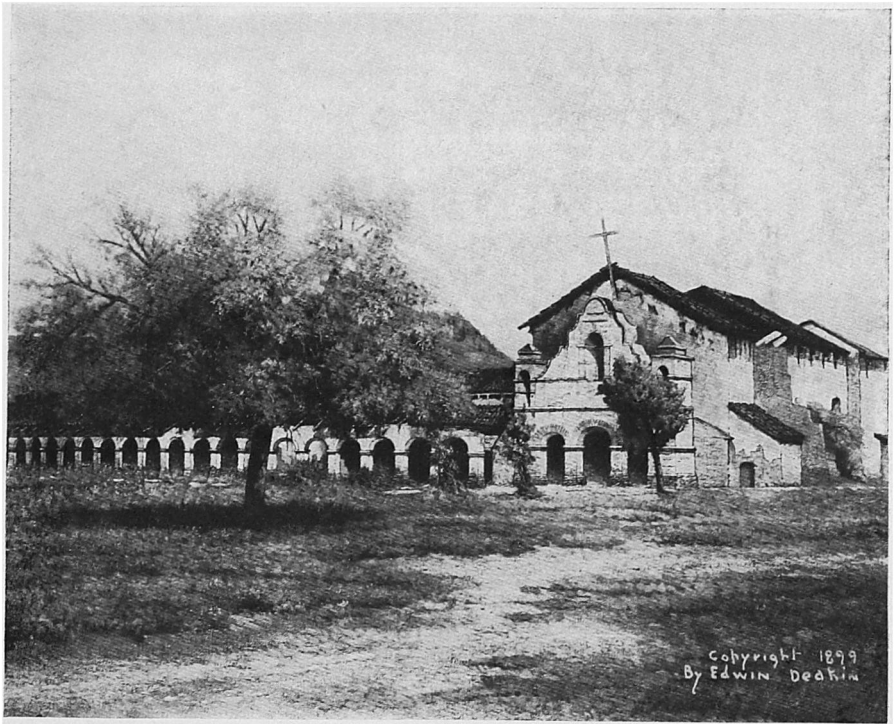
There is little need, perhaps, here to tax the reader with the names even, let alone a description of the remainder of these twenty-one old relics. They all have their individual interest and their individual beauty. They vary in their style of structure and in their



SAN JUAN CAPISTRANO

By Edwin Deakin

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SAN ANTONIO
By Edwin Deakin

condition, but there is not a one of them, as is evidenced by the reproductions accompanying this article, that is not worthy of the brush of a painter. Naturally Mr. Deakin is an enthusiast over the charms of the old places. He has taken his text from the poet: "So fleet the works of men back to the earth again, ancient and holy things fade like a dream," and he has sought to record these holy things before, like a dream, they have faded from memory. In his self-assigned task he has done a work for which every lover of the beautiful past should be grateful.

Possessing as they do so marked an historical value, apart from all considerations of artistic merit, it would be little less than a pity if the series of canvases were broken and the pictures dispersed, to find lodgment in private homes or widely scattered public institutions. Being of the old California that is fast succumbing to time and change, they should be for the California of to-day; and one would feel a sense of satisfaction if some of the institutions of that state were to take steps toward securing the collection with a view to maintaining it in its entirety.

ROBERT L. HEWITT.